

November 25, 2005

USAID/CAR Bi-weekly Report

Regional

USAID Program Uses Televised Mock Trials for Public Legal Education

Television is a popular source of information both in Kazakhstan and in largely rural Tajikistan. The USAID Legal Education Reform Program, implemented by the American Bar Association Central European and Eurasian Law Initiative (ABA/CEELI), is tapping into this venue to extend legal education to broader audiences.

In September, the largest television station in Khojand, Tajikistan broadcast a story featuring the USAID-supported National Mock Trial Competition. The station interviewed the champion team, the deputy dean of the students' law school, and staff from the implementer of the USAID program, ABA/CEELI.

In Kazakhstan, ABA/CEELI adjusted the mock trial scenario to fit with the popular court-room TV dramas. The televised case on alleged bribery of a low-level state official was followed by a segment where an expert from Transparency International Kazakhstan presented additional information and answered questions on corruption and its broader implications. The trial and the expert forum were broadcast nationwide in an hour-long television show.

These innovative initiatives were based on ABA/CEELI experience in conducting mock trials to train law students in practical lawyering skills. Mock trials are an important innovation for law curricula, which was previously taught solely through rote memorization, and provide law students opportunities to practice in an adversarial trial system.

USAID Facilitates Central Asian Cooperation on Metrology, Accreditation, Standardization and Quality

Members of the National Metrology and Standards Institutes of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan officially established the Central Asian Cooperation (CAC) on Metrology, Accreditation, Standardization and Certification (CAC-MAS-Q) at an October 31 meeting facilitated by USAID. The CAC promotes harmonization of metrology practices, use of international standards and acceptance of certification and accreditation procedures within the region and to achieve mutual recognition and acceptance by international MAS-Q organizations. The meeting and workshop included delegates from the Central Asian Republics, donor organizations, and international consultants. USAID supported the CAC activity through its Trade Facilitation and Investment Project, implemented by Pragma Corporation, as part of its efforts to increase regional trade.



Tajik State University law student Boltuev Umedjon (in the center) and CEELI staff celebrate Boltuev's and his teammate's (not shown) victory in Tajikistan's National Mock Trial Competition.

Photo: ABA/CEELI



The defendant confers with her defense attorney during the televised mock trial in Kazakhstan.

Photo: ABA/CEELI



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

Improved Water Monitoring Facilitates Increase Usage of Fields by Thousands of Hectares

Better harvests and 100-200 thousand hectares of additionally cultivated cotton fields are only some of the immediate benefits from the improved water supply for irrigation during the 2005 high vegetation season in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The improvements are a direct result of USAID's water sector technical assistance, implemented by the U.S. Meteor Communications Corporation and PA Consulting.

USAID installed meteor-burst communication equipment in the Dispatcher Center of the Regional Syr Darya Basin Water Organization, which regulates water flow among the four Syr Darya riparian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan). The communication equipment is part of the meteor-burst system, which USAID helped build in the four countries. The system supplies water users with hourly information on water-flow, measured at key trans-boundary gauges installed along the Syr Darya River. The new system enables the Syr Darya Basin Water Organization to monitor and regulate the flow changes along the stream, allocate water among the four states, and prevent floods in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.



Communication equipment is part of a meteor-burst system that USAID helped install in the region.

Photo: PA Consortium

Tajikistan

USAID's Assistance Leads to New Deals

Participation in a recent agricultural fair was especially successful for two entrepreneurs from Tajikistan. One of them, a cheese producer, signed a contract with Kyrgyz firms to provide them with 500kg of cheese monthly. The second entrepreneur, a baby corn processor, agreed to trade twist-off jars, jarred baby corn, and mushrooms with his new contacts from Kyrgyzstan.

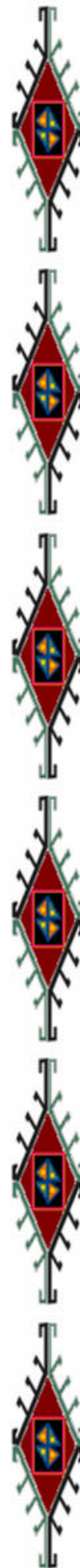
The participation of these Tajikistanis in the Central Asian Annual AgroExpo "Silk Road," which took place in Osh from November 8-12, was facilitated by USAID's Agricultural Finance Plus Project.

The project, implemented by Winrock International, is a three-year agricultural value chain capacity-building activity to help generate personal income for Tajik farmers.

Microfinance Institution in Tajikistan Disburses Millionth Dollar

As of November, the USAID-supported Microfinance Institution FINCA Tajikistan has disbursed over \$1.1 million through small group and individual loans in Khatlon Oblast and Dushanbe City. The microfinance institution operates a loan portfolio of over \$385,000 and serves almost 1,400 clients through its three offices in Dushanbe, Kurgan-Tube, and Kulob.

FINCA (which stands for the Foundation for international Community Assistance) began its operations in Tajikistan in December 2003. USAID supports the institution through its Central Asia Microfinance Alliance Project, implemented by ACDI/VOCA. USAID provided assistance with the start-up of FINCA's work, helped establish sustainable operations, and expanded its access to finance. Recently, FINCA has started the process of re-registering under the Microfinance Law as a Microfinance Deposit-Taking Organization.



Kazakhstan

USAID Helps TV Channel in Karaganda Introduce Pre-election Political Debate Shows

As part of USAID's support for the presidential election process in Kazakhstan, a team of Internews specialists recently worked with Channel 5 in Karaganda to produce a political debate show in the Kazakh language and a political talk show in Russian. Channel 5 had never worked in these two formats before, and the debate was the first-ever live program broadcast by any private TV station in the city. Both shows addressed issues that are of particular interest in the context of Kazakhstan's presidential elections, such as economic and political reforms and the role of the opposition.

The debate program, "Post Scriptum," aired live in prime time, and had two guests, a representative from the opposition Ak Zhol party and a representative from the presidential Otan party. For the first time, viewers were able to call the studio during the program, ask questions, and participate in an interactive poll. During the 30-minute program, the station received approximately 300 phone calls. The talk show, "Time to Decide," was pre-recorded and will air in prime time later this month. The show has three guests from different political factions, all well-known public figures in Karaganda, as well as a 25-person audience, who asked questions and commented on the guests' debates. The program will also feature an elections-related poll of the viewers during the broadcast.

Kyrgyzstan

Parliamentary Elections in Azerbaijan Use Inking Equipment from Kyrgyzstan

Five thousand bottles of invisible ink and 850 Ultra-Violet lamps used during the Kyrgyz parliamentary and presidential elections were shipped to Azerbaijan on October 29, for use in the November 6 parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan. The ink was supplied at the urgent request of the Azerbaijan Government, which had recently decided to use the indelible, invisible ink for the first time in Azeri elections. The equipment was provided by USAID's election support programs in Kyrgyzstan, implemented by International Foundation for Election Systems. The foundation also provided the Azerbaijan Government with Russian-language versions of a poster illustrating how the ink is used.

